

Listing of Claims:

1. -2. (canceled).

3. (currently amended) The method of claim 16[[1]], wherein said weld is produced without spot welding, and further comprising the step of exerting a force on at least one of the ends of the walls of said body and said cover to thereby maintain said body and said cover in contact during welding.

4. (currently amended) The method of claim 16[[1]], wherein said weld is produced without a filler metal.

5.- 6. (canceled).

7. (currently amended) The method of claim 16[[1]], wherein said weld is produced with the container substantially in the vertical position, with the weld axis substantially horizontal.

8. (previously presented) The method of claim 7, wherein said weld is produced with the container being fixed and with a welding head which is rotated around said container at the level of the ends of the walls maintained in contact.

9. (currently amended) The method of claim 16[[1]], wherein the method is carried out to produce a closed container for confined packaging and storage of hazardous waste.

10.- 14. (canceled).

15. (previously presented) The method of claim 9, wherein said hazardous waste is nuclear waste.

16. (previously presented) A method of producing a closed container with a tight and mechanically strong seal by fastening together:

a metal body having an axis with a shape that is one of cylindrical and prismatic, said body having a base with at least one axial wall parallel to said axis and an open top axial end; and

a metal cover having an axis coaxial with said axis of said body and at least one end wall parallel to said axis, said end wall of said cover to be positioned at said top axial end of said body facing said at least one axial wall of said body;

wherein at least one of said body and said cover includes a docking guide having a groove therein, said groove including a degassing chimney;

wherein at least one of said body and said cover includes a degassing vent; and

wherein the method comprises the following steps, carried out in a hostile environment in an automated manner, under remote control:

docking said body and said cover so that said axial wall of said body in the vicinity of said open top thereof and said end wall of said cover face each other and are maintained in contact, said docking being performed by guiding said cover and body together by said docking guide;

producing a continuous penetrative weld over the entire periphery of said cover and said body at the ends of their respective walls which are maintained in contact, said weld being

produced by open jet plasma with melt-bath back cover, wherein said open jet opens into said groove;

limiting the internal overpressure in the container produced; and

blanking off said degassing vent after said weld has been produced.

17.- 18. (canceled).